Open Awards Access to Higher Education Handbook

2017-2018

HANDBOOK

1. Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the Open Awards Access to Higher Education Provider Handbook

The Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma is a widely recognised qualification that prepares adults for entry to Higher Education.

At Open Awards, we have a dedicated team who look after our Access to HE provision to ensure that quality remains high and that our providers are fully supported.

This handbook aims to give you a comprehensive overview of the processes required to deliver Open Awards' Access to Higher Education Diplomas and is intended as a primary reference for all those involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of the Access to Higher Education Diplomas, including:

- Administration and Exams Officers
- Coordinators
- Managers (including Quality Managers)
- Internal Verifiers
- Tutor / Assessors

This handbook helps ensure that all parties meet the requirements of the [QAA Licensing Criteria for Access Validating Agencies](). From time to time QAA may amend or add criteria in year, which will result in us needing to amend our processes. On these occasions we will notify you of the changes as soon as possible and provide support on implementing any changes.

We hope that you find this handbook useful and informative. If you have any questions or queries about any information provided here, please feel free to contact our Access to HE team on 0151 494 2072 or email [ahed@openawards.org.uk]().

All information we hold about your Centre, key contacts, and your learners are held securely on our database and only used for the purposes provided. Please ensure you have parental/guardian consent to share your learners' data with us if the learner is under the age of 13. You will find full details on how we use and protect your information at Open Awards in our [Privacy Notice](). The Privacy Notice gives you details on:

- Your rights in relation to the information we hold;
- How we keep it secure;
- The type of information we collect and how we use it;
- Who we share information with;
- How long we hold information for.

Access to Higher Education Diploma

The Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma is a Level 3 qualification which prepares learners to study as an undergraduate at University. Traditionally students progress through GCSEs and A-Levels before applying to Higher Education, however the Access to Higher Education Diploma offers an alternative route to learners. With this qualification, learners can apply directly to UCAS.

Popular HE Subjects

Higher Education disciplines most studied by Access to HE learners include:

Education

Business

Social Studies

Biological Science

Medicine

Learner Progression

75% (25,480) of Access to Higher Education Learners were accepted by Higher Education Providers in their local area

25,480

Access to Higher Education learners progressed into university alone in 2015 - a 10% increase on the previous year.

Leaners on an Access to HE Diploma in 2015 comprised:

72% women

28% Men

Commitment of Access to HE Learners - Key Facts

91% of learners intended to complete their Access to HE Diploma within the year

2,095 registered learners in Wales

9% of learners studied part -time

40,655 registered learners in England

1.2 Why Work with Open Awards?

We know that Access to HE Diplomas require commitment and dedication from both staff and learners. We believe that it is our duty to ensure that all Access to HE providers who deliver our Diplomas feel supported and confident to work effectively with their learners.

At Open Awards, we believe in Changing Lives Through Learning and it is no secret that Access to HE Diplomas do transform people's lives. It is vital therefore that we work collaboratively with providers to ensure that everything we do is learner-focused and to the highest possible standards so that learners have the best possible chance to progress onto Higher Education.

Automated Systems

'Markbook' enables tutors to track their learners' grades throughout their learning time and prevent manual input of data at the end of term.

Reduced Administrative Burden

We are constantly reviewing our processes to improve effectiveness and have stripped down all paperwork so that time can be used more efficiently with learners.

Value for Money

We are competitively priced and work closely with all of our providers to ensure real value for money.

Experienced Team

Our team have years of experience in the delivery and administration of the Diploma. We believe personalisation is the key to a healthy working relationship.

Resources and Research

We are continuously striving to improve our offer and support. We produce resources to keep providers up-to-date with relevant sector information, as well as provide best practice examples.

1.3 Open Awards Access to Higher Education Team

With many of us having previously worked in schools and colleges, we have first-hand knowledge of the needs of our providers. Here is some information about us and what we love about working in the Open Awards Access to HE team:

Katherine Wales
[Access to HE Manager]

Katherine spends a lot of time talking to providers to ensure they're fully supported. She responds to their needs by helping develop new provisions.

Ann Marie Williams
[Access to HE Officer]

Ann Marie ensures the smooth running of all Access to HE provision. She helps with all administration tasks as well as providing training on process and procedures.

Heather Akehurst
[Chief Executive Officer]

Heather is completely learner-focused. She helps spread the life-changing value of the Access to HE Diploma to everyone she meets.

Kerry Patrick
[Information Systems Officer]

Kerry is completely data-oriented. One of her many roles is to ensure that all data between UCAS and QAA is accurate and works effectively.

1.4 Becoming an Approved Open Awards Access to HE Provider

If you would like to offer an Access to HE Diploma with us, the first thing you need to do is to become an approved Open Awards provider. This involves completing two simple Centre Recognition forms that ask you to provide us with information on how you plan to develop, deliver and manage your courses

As all Access to HE Diplomas are regulated by the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency), we have to collect this information to ensure we comply with all regulatory obligations.

The process to become a recognised provider with Open Awards is outlined below:

Complete the Centre Recognition Form and the Supplementary Access to HE Approval Forms. To request these forms, please email ahed@openawards.org.uk.

One of our team will come to meet you and discuss your Access to HE plans.

You will then be able to pay your Centre Recognition and Annual Fee and sign the Open Awards Centre Agreement.

You will receive continuing support from our dedicated team of experts, which includes training and curriculum development to ensure high-quality processes.

Sometimes we might need to work with you to develop your application before we can give you approval. If this is the case we can offer packages of support to help you meet the required standards. If you are not subject to external inspection from a government agency, for example Ofsted, you will be subject to additional ongoing quality checks.

Your status as an Approved Provider for Access to HE will be re-confirmed each year through the moderation process.

Once this is complete we can begin working with you to build Access to HE Diploma(s) for the subject(s) and progression route(s) you are planning. See the 'How to Build Your Access to HE Diploma' section for more information see page 9.

We have tried to make the process as simple as possible, but if you need help at any point then you can contact the Open Awards Office on 0151 494 2072 and ask to speak to a member of the Access to HE Team who will be happy to guide you through the process and answer your questions.

1.5 How to Build Your Own Access to HE Diploma with Open Awards

Building your Access to HE Diploma is as easy as 1, 2, 3…

1. **Selecting a Diploma Title:** Firstly, consider what degree course(s) and career pathway(s) you would like to prepare your learners for and select a Diploma title that reflects this.

2. **Choosing Content to Satisfy Rules of Combination:** Secondly, build your Diploma by choosing modules and units from our bank of units according to the Rules of Combination set out below. You must ensure that the content you chose meets the requirements of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to which your learners are most likely to progress.

3. **Submitting your Proposal:** Thirdly, submit your proposal to us for review. We will consult with a range of stakeholders, such as HEIs themselves, other providers and moderators who will ensure that the content meets the intended purpose.

Let's look at these stages in a bit more detail:

1.5.1 Selecting a Diploma Title

Titles of Access to HE Diplomas are important as the title must reflect the intended HE destination for those learners undertaking the Diploma. The titles must conform to a QAA-prescribed format:

> **Access to HE Diploma (name of subject/area of study/progression route)**

Examples:

- Access to HE Diploma (Engineering)
- Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)
- Access to HE Diploma (Medical Health Professions)

Open Awards has a selection of pre-agreed Access to HE Diploma titles which should be used in the first instance. If you are unable to find a suitable title, new titles can be considered. Contact the Access to HE team on 0151 494 2072 who will be able to advise on how to go about doing this.

1.5.2 Rules of Combination

These are the rules which govern the combination of modules and units you are required to use to build your Access to HE Diploma. This information is clearly displayed on page 14 where you can view all modules available in each pathway. You can also go to the Open Awards website (www.openawards.org.uk) view all of the Access to HE units available using the 'Search Access to HE' tool.

When you are ready to create your Diploma, our Diploma Creator Tool (Merlin) and supportive Access to HE team will help guide you through the design process and make sure you are confident and are following the correct Rules of Combination.

The overarching rules are:

- The units in your Diploma must total **60 credits** with subject content from one pathway
- **45** of these credits must be from **graded Level 3** units that have academic content
- **15** of these credits will be from **ungraded units at Level 2 or Level 3**. These units may be academic content or developmental.

The three different types of unit mentioned can easily be identified from their unit codes outlined below:

Unit Type	Coding
Graded Academic	GA
Ungraded Academic	UA
Ungraded Developmental	UD

When building your Access to HE Diploma, you can only choose units attached to the specific pathway. Our subject pathways are:

Open Awards currently have 7 pathways available.			**Humanities and Social Science**
	Health		**Creative and Performing Arts**
	Science and Engineering		**Construction and the Built Environment**
	Computing		**Business and Management**

Each pathway contains a number of modules that include units covering specific subject areas.

Diplomas must contain a minimum of 2 and no more than 4 modules from academic subjects to ensure that the content is coherent and relevant to the intended progression routes.

Additional Subject Specific Rules of Combination

In addition to the rules of combination listed above, some additional rules apply if you intend to create Diplomas in certain pathways:

- **Health Pathway:** Diplomas created in the Health Pathway **must have at least 15 credits** from the Human Biology module
- **Teaching**: Diplomas intended to progress learners into Teaching **must have 15 credits** from graded academic units in a National Curriculum subject

Using Alternative Modules to Include Optional Units

You may include optional units within your Diploma through the use of alternative modules. For example, you might be building one Access to HE Diploma with the option for your learners to choose between two modules within that Diploma.

To do this you should submit your Diploma with some interchangeable modules of the same credit value. The Merlin Diploma Creator Tool will guide you through your selection.

Please note: If you build your Diploma in this way, you will need to make sure that

Assessors and Internal Verifiers are aware of the alternative combinations of units for the Diploma to ensure that the correct combination of units are delivered and assessed as errors may adversely affect learner achievement. The Access to HE Team is always on hand to help you ensure that this is done correctly.

1.5.3 Submitting Your Proposal for Review

When you have successfully created your Diploma you should submit it for approval to ahed@openawards.org.uk to enable the team to check it through and seek stakeholder approval through a validation panel. The Diploma will then be presented to the Access to HE Committee and Board of Trustees for final approval. **You can only start delivery once you have been notified by us that your Diploma has been approved.**

Important: Once a named Diploma has been approved, the title and the units attached to the Diploma are fixed and may not be changed after learners have been registered upon it. This means that if a learner has been taught and assessed for different units to those specifically identified, they will not achieve the Diploma qualification.

Diploma Revalidation

Your Diploma will need to be revalidated at least every five years. Revalidation follows the same process as initial development and ensures that the Diploma content still has the support of all stakeholders.

Access to Higher Education Diploma

Unit Types Explained

Graded Academic Units (GA)

These units are level 3 subject units which make up the bulk of your Diploma. Each unit is made up either 3 or 6 credits. They must total 45 credits.

Ungraded Academic Units (UA)

We have identical ungraded versions of all our graded units.

These can be used to introduce learners to the Diploma subjects and to level 3 study.

They can be combined with a selection of Ungraded Development Units (UD) or used on their own to build the required 15 credits of ungraded units.

Ungraded Developmental Units (UD)

These units can be Level 2 or Level 3 and are intended to help learners develop both the academic and study skills necessary to meet the demands of achievement at level 3.

They can be combined with a selection of Ungraded Academic Units (UA) or used on their own to build the required 15 credits of ungraded units.

The Open Awards Level 3 Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma is a life changing qualification specifically designed for adult learners as an alternative route to A-Levels onto university degree courses. Learners are required to achieve 60 credits in total to achieve this Diploma but there are certain Rules of Combination required. Follow the three steps below to build your very own Access to HE Diploma.

In order to achieve the full Diploma, learners must gain **45** Academic Graded Credits (GA) **and 15** Credits from Ungraded Academic Credits (UA) **and/or** Ungraded Developmental Units (UD).

Choose Pathway and Modules

You have 7 pathways to choose from.

You must choose a **minimum** of 2 modules and a **maximum** of 4 modules from the **same** pathway

Choose Graded Academic Units (GA)(45 Credits)

Once you have chosen your pathway and 2-4 modules, now you can choose your Graded Academic Units within these chosen modules.

Choose Combination of Ungraded Academic (UA) and/or Ungraded Developmental Units (UD)(15 Credits)

You can now choose 15 credits from the Ungraded Academic units (UA) and/or Ungraded Developmental units. (UD).

Units **must be** from the same modules you chose for your graded academic units.

New Diplomas should be submitted to Open Awards using the Diploma Creator Tool otherwise known as 'Merlin'. It is a form that both guides your through the process as well as captures all of the information we need to approve your diploma .

For support and for a copy of the form, please contact a member of the team at ahed@openawards.org.uk or call 0151 494 2072.

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Subject Pathways & Modules

Access to HE Diplomas are broken down into different **pathways**.
Each pathway contains different **modules**.
Each module is made up of **units**.
Each unit is worth 3, 6 or 9 **credits**.

Are you choosing a Teaching/ITT Diploma?

These Diplomas follow exactly the same rules as above but also stipulate that you must complete a minimum of 15 graded credits from national curriculum modules. These national curriculum modules are indicated with a star.

Are you choosing from the Health Pathway?

These Diplomas follow exactly the same combination rules but also stipulate that you must complete at least 15 graded credits the Human Biology Module

Health
- Human Biology
- Health Studies
- Microbiology
- Psychology
- Science for Health
- Sport and Exercise
- Sociology

Creative and Performing Arts
- Art & Design ★
- Business
- English ★
- Film, Media and Culture
- Media Make-up
- Performing Arts

Business and Management
- Business
- ICT Applications ★
- Law
- Management
- Sport and Exercise

Science and Engineering
- Biology ★
- Chemistry ★
- Education
- Electrical & Electronic Engineering ★
- Geography & Environmental Studies ★
- Mathematics ★
- Microbiology
- Physics ★
- Psychology

Humanities and Social Science
- Archaeology
- Criminology
- Education
- English ★
- Geography & Environmental Studies ★
- History ★
- Law
- Politics
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Theology & Religious Studies ★

Computing
- Computing
- Commercial Aspects of Computing
- Maths for Computing

Construction and the Built Environment
- Business
- Construction
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering ★
- Geography & Environmental Studies ★
- Management
- Mathematics ★
- Physics ★

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1.6   Blended and Distance Learning

We are happy to support you to innovate and use technologies to deliver your Diplomas via methodologies of this type; however, we will require some extra information from you to make sure that your course complies with QAA regulations.

Aspects to consider for Distance Learning are:
- Enrolment
- Admission
- Resources
- Learner support
- Assessment
- Quality Assurance

We classify diplomas where 75% of the Diploma learning hours are delivered remotely as distance learning.

1.7 Making Changes to your Approved Diploma

Once your Access to HE Diploma has been approved by the Open Awards Board of Trustees it can only be amended through a formal change process. This section explains how this process works and gives an indication of the timescales involved.

Depending on the size and scope of the change you propose to your Diploma it will be classified as either minor or major change. The classification will determine the process that the change must follow to be approved.

The following table shows how we categorise these changes and the subsequent actions required.

How do you know if it is a minor or major change?

Change Type	Change Description	Action Required
Minor Change	A change of up to 15 credits selected from an existing validated module within a validated Diploma as long as Open Awards consider that the change will not detract from the coherence of the Diploma, its suitability for the stated progression route, and the rules of combination are still met.	Minor Change form to be completed and submitted to ahed@openawards.org.uk
Minor Change	Change to Diploma title using a title existing Open Awards' QAA approved title that aligns to the content and rationale of the Diploma.	
Minor Change	Addition of an alternative module to an existing validated Diploma, as long as this has the same credit value as the original module, and the alternative module is comparable in demand to its alternative.	
Major Change	A change to an existing approved Diploma involving more than 15 credits	Diploma Creator Tool (Merlin) to be completed and submitted to ahed@openawards.org.uk
Major Change	A replacement of one or more modules by another from the same pathway	

Other requested changes may also be considered and we will use our discretion as to the process to be followed to approve any change.

1.7.1 Making Minor Changes

You should submit minor changes to ahed@openawards.org.uk using the Minor Change Request Form. If the change is considered acceptable and the Diploma is still fit for purpose for the intended target group and stated progression route, the change will be approved for all future registrations on the Diploma. We will confirm the changes in writing.

Minor changes will be processed within one calendar month. Changes you wish to be processed for the next academic year must be received by the end of **July** at the latest in order to guarantee that they will be processed for the following September.
Form available here: http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-administration/

1.7.2 Making Major Changes

If you wish to make a major change to your Diploma you will need to request and submit a new Merlin to ahed@openawards.org.uk. These changes will be processed in the same way as new Diplomas.

1.8 Making Amendments to the Open Awards Access to HE National Programme

Open Awards welcomes suggestions for any proposed changes to the structure and content of its Access to HE National Programme and unit bank from all stakeholders of the qualification. This ensures that the qualification remains valid and fit for purpose. Examples of these changes could be:

1.8.1 Making Textual Changes to Units

You can make suggestions for textual changes to units to the Access to HE Manager who will review them with you and then submit them to the Access to HE Committee and Board of Trustees for approval if appropriate.

1.8.2 Requesting New Units

If you cannot find the unit content you are looking for you may propose the content for a new unit. The unit will be considered by a minimum of **three** readers with appropriate subject specialism and curriculum expertise before being submitted to the Open Awards Access to HE Committee and Board of Trustees for approval. Once approved, you will be able to include the unit in your Diploma.

1.8.3 New Modules and Pathways

We welcome business cases for the proposal of new modules and pathways, which can be submitted to the Access to HE Manager for review by the Open Awards management team. As changes to the national programme structure may impact on some or all users of the Diploma, we will ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the consultation process before any major change is agreed and implemented. Changes should not be implemented until you have written confirmation that the changes have been approved.

All Open Awards Access to HE units are valid for a maximum period of 5 years following addition to the Access to HE National Programme. Open Awards conduct reviews of a selection of units across the academic year to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Providers are invited to comment on the suitability of units as part of the review process before they are taken to panel for renewal.

2. Promoting your Access to HE Diploma

We would encourage you to actively market your Access to HE Diploma in order to attract the cohort of learners you require. We do ask that you take note of our branding guidelines so that we can ensure a consistent message is being communicated.

The guidance for using the Open Awards logo and the QAA Access to HE logo are available on the Open Awards website (http://openawards.org.uk/media/2484/open-awards-external-branding-guidance.pdf)

Where you are actively marketing an Open Awards Access to HE Diploma, we ask that, **as a minimum**, you include the following information:

- Any entry requirements to the course, where applicable
- Any additional requirements for professional progression (e.g. a GCSE C in English, Maths and Science for primary school teaching)
- Details of the cost of the course, including the Open Awards registration fee if this is charged separately
- Please also make it clear that successful completion of an Access to HE Diploma does not guarantee access to Higher Education, but rather allows learners to apply to via UCAS.

As best practice you should:

- Indicate possible vocational progression routes
- Include labour market intelligence to demonstrate the need for the qualification
- Explain funding opportunities, such as Advanced Learning Loans
- Provide case studies of previous Access to HE learners
- Highlight alternative methods of delivery used on your course

We will review the way you promote your Access to HE Diploma with you every year as part of the Annual Compliance Monitoring visit to ensure it meets these guidelines.

If you need any support with marketing your Diploma, contact a member of the Access to HE team who will be happy to help.

3. How to Use the Open Awards Paperwork

The table shows the internal verification and assessment paper work. The documents can be accessed here http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/

Previous Code	Document Types
TA1A and TA1B	**Assessment Plan** - Not a mandatory document if the Scheme of Work identifies the assignment type, assessment criteria and grade descriptors being assessed.
TA2G, TA2U, TA2AG, TA2AG	**Assignment Brief** – Mandatory document to be used for both graded and ungraded assignments. Add or remove grade descriptor tables as necessary. All relevant sections to be fully completed. The overall achievement/grade for the complete unit to be indicated in the box provided on the front sheet. This can be used either electronically or as a hard copy.
TA2G, TA2U, TA2BG, TA2BU	**Assignment Feedback** – Mandatory document to be used for both graded and ungraded assignments. If marking an ungraded unit, give developmental feedback against the assessment criteria. If the unit is graded but all assessment criteria have not been achieved, use the section for feedback against assessment criteria to give developmental feedback to the learner and complete the re-submission section on the assignment brief. If all assessment criteria have been achieved then circle yes in the box provided then give developmental feedback against the grade descriptors for the assignment. Remove the rows for the grade descriptors that are not attached to the assignment. This can be used electronically or as a hard copy.

IV1, IV2G, IV2U	**Internal Verification Record** – Mandatory document to be used for both graded and ungraded assignments. One document should be completed for each individual module, e.g. Biology, Sociology. If any module is used in more than one Diploma all of the internal verification for the module can be completed in the one document. Pre-delivery verification of the assignment brief must be completed before the assignment is given to the learners. If appropriate, the section entitled 'Action Required' should be completed and shared with the tutor. Any actions must be completed before the learner receives the assignment brief. Post-delivery internal verification should take place as soon as possible in order to address any issues that may arise. It is recommended that this document be used electronically.
TA3	**Group Profile** –Not a mandatory document if the Direct Entry of Results (DER) is completed throughout the year. However it is recommended as a method of tracking grade profiles and monitoring assignment grades.

4. Preparing Your Assignments

One of the many benefits of an Open Awards Access to HE Diploma is that you design the assignments yourself to suit the context of delivery and to make the most of the variety of assessments methods available to you. Here are a few things to consider when designing your assignments:

1   Transparency

- The requirements of a unit expressed in the Learning Outcomes and associated Assessment Criteria should be made available to the learner
- The requirements of the assessment should be expressed clearly in relation to the Assessment Criteria
- The specific grade descriptor components used to grade learners' work must be published together with the assignment brief

2   Fairness

- Assignments must be written in a style and using language that makes them as accessible as possible to all learners
- The skills required to complete an assessment must relate to the subject and topics being assessed

3   Reliability

- An assessment strategy may be considered to be reliable if, when used with different groups of learners, it produces similar outcomes in terms of successful completion as well as in terms of the range of grades achieved

4   Validity

- The outcomes of assessment may be considered to be valid if:
    - the evidence of assessment can be attributed to a specific learner
    - the assessor is able to justify achievement and recommended grades against the specific criteria for the Unit

5   Sufficiency

- The evidence of assessment should be sufficient to allow that assessor to make a judgement that a learner has achieved all the Learning Outcomes for a unit and to justify any recommended grades
- There must be evidence that the learner has fully met all of the Assessment Criteria and the evidence should be balanced and reflect the demands of the criteria

6   Authenticity

- Open Awards requires that at least one assessment from each module in a Diploma course is observed.
- Ensure that you collect learner statements and signatures (Assignment Brief)
- Encourage the use of referencing and bibliographies
- Discourage "passive recycling of sources"

8 | Delivery and Assessment

- Operate a formal approach to the submission of learner work
- Set deadlines must be notified to learners in writing (Assignment Brief)
- At least one unit for each module should have some element of supervised assessment
- Work is assessed against the specific Assessment Criteria for the Unit
- A learner's submission is successful if they have achieved all the Learning Outcomes attached to an assignment by meeting all the associated Assessment Criteria
- Each Assessment Criteria can/should be formally assessed only once
- Grades are assigned by reference to common grade descriptor components
- Only the components published by the QAA may be used
- Draft submissions are allowed, however no indication of grade can be discussed with the learner. You can discuss whether Assessment Criteria has been met or not

When designing your assignments, it's important to consider your overall assessment plan for the whole Diploma course. Considerations should include;

- Number of assignments
- Type and range of assessments
- How tasks will allow for differentiation
- An assessment strategy for the whole Diploma
- A schedule
- Consideration as to whether the strategy prepare learners for Higher Education
- Make time for pre-delivery Internal Verification

9 | Identify Areas of Improvement Through Evaluation and Standardisation

- Assessments and units should be reviewed taking into account achievement data, suitability and learner and tutor feedback.
- Consider Moderator feedback
- Ensure that you have standardisation policy and schedule in place
- Take part in external standardisation activities
- Contribute to Open Awards unit reviews

Training on assignment writing is provided throughout the Academic year by Open Awards to providers. Dates will be provided in the summer term in readiness for the following academic year.

Further information and guidance on unit assessment can be found on the QAA Access to HE Website in the Grading Scheme Handbook;

(https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Pages/Default.aspx)

5. Access to HE Diploma Grading

Grading for the Access to HE Diploma was introduced nationally in 2009 and revised in 2013. All Diplomas now **have 45 credits from graded academic units and 15 credits from ungraded** units that can either be academic or developmental. The combination of units in a diploma is chosen when you submit a new diploma for approval.

Each graded academic unit will be awarded as Pass, Merit or Distinction by Open Awards at the Final Awards Board (FAB) following recommendation by the relevant assessor and by internal verification. **Grades are not final until after the Final Awards Board. Learners should be made aware that any grades recorded by the tutor/assessor are subject to change until after this point.**

Assessor recommended grades should be recorded throughout the year following internal verification on the Open Awards Markbook. For more information on using the Open Awards Markbook, please see the Markbook Guidance which is available on the Open Awards Portal. Open Awards provide training and support annually on the application of grading. It is also a key area covered by external standardisation.

For all up-to-date information and guidance regarding grading, please refer to the QAA Access to HE grading scheme handbook which can be found on the QAA website. (https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Pages/Default.aspx)

The documents that explain the QAA guidelines on grading are:
- Grading Scheme Handbook: Index (September 2013)
- Grading Scheme Handbook Section A: Introduction and Summary (September 2013)
- Grading Scheme Handbook Section B: The Grade Descriptors (September 2013)
- Grading Scheme Handbook Section C: Using Grade Descriptors in Assessment (September 2013)
- Grading Scheme Handbook Section D: Moderation and Standardisation (September 2013)
- Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards (September 2013)
- Tutors' Quick Guide to Grading (September 2013)

6. Drafting, Submissions, Re-submissions and Extensions

6.1 Managing Drafts, Submissions and Re-submissions

It is a requirement that you publish procedures for the formal submission of work for assessment in your course handbook. These procedures must be the same for all the Access Diplomas that you have approval for and must include:

   a. Information on drafting
   b. How to make a formal submission
   c. Information on deadlines
   d. How to request an extension
   e. Late submissions
   f. Supervised assessment
   g. Resubmission
   h. Referrals
   i. Representation
   j. Appeals

Your procedures must conform to QAA requirements set out in:
   - **QAA Grading scheme handbook, Section C**
   - **QAA Grading Scheme Handbook, Section E**

(https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Pages/Default.aspx) Please note the following Open Awards specific procedures relating to the above:

6.1.1 Extensions

Requests for extensions can only be made due to extenuating circumstances and must be made in writing. Providers need to submit these requests to the Open Awards Quality team (quality@openawards.org.uk) for consideration as soon as possible with a deadline of the day before the final pathway moderation. Requests for extension must be accompanied by supporting evidence. Decisions will be confirmed either in writing or on the date of the Final Awards Board.

Any requests that are not approved by the deadline should be discussed with the Pathway Moderator at the final pathway moderation meeting.

Please note: Any units that the learners managed to achieve should be moderated as normal. Learners with approved extensions will not have any awards certificated until the provider has submitted the final results.

Further guidance can be found on the extensions request form which is available on www.openawards.org.uk.

6.1.2 Referrals

A referral is defined as the following:

When a student has not achieved one or more of the learning outcomes on first resubmission or when a first submission was late with or without an agreed extension, the student may be referred for permission to make a further submission. (QAA Grading Scheme Handbook)

You can make a referral request in one of two ways:

1) **Sufficient Time before End of Course**

   A referral submitted by the course tutor on behalf of the learner may be considered by the curriculum manager if there is sufficient time before the end of the course run. All requests must be documented using the Mid-Course Referral Form. Completed forms and supporting evidence must be made available to the Pathway Moderator at the moderation visit closest to the request (whether the request was approved or not) and records must be made available at the Final Awards Board.

Learner Referral Request Form (within the duration of the course)

http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-administration/

2) **Insufficient Time Before End of Course**

   If there is insufficient time before the end of a course run, a referral request may be made to the Final Awards Board using the Referral at FAB form.
   The members of the Final Awards Board will consider whether a further opportunity for resubmission should be allowed. If this is the case, they will outline what the particular requirements of the resubmission must be.

If a referral is agreed and a learner meets all the learning outcomes of an assessment the grade indicators for the referred   resubmission are **capped at a Pass.**

The Mid-Course Referral and the Referral at FAB Forms can be found on the Open Awards website - http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/

7. Using Equivalencies, Exemptions and Credit Transfer

7.1 Exemptions allow the learner to be given credit for both Level 2 and Level 3 units where appropriate accredited prior learning has taken place on non-Access courses.

7.2 Credit transfer enables credit for equivalent units gained on Access to HE courses awarded by other AVAs to be recognised providing the content of the unit/s from which those credits were gained matches the content of the unit/s for which they wish to claim credit transfer. Both exemptions and credit transfer are permitted under the rules of the Open Awards Access to HE Diploma. However their use is limited as a learner must be registered against a specific set of units representing 60 credits.

The specific rules for the use of exemptions and credit transfer of equivalent units are:

7.2.1 Level 2 Exemptions
- The use of Level 2 exemptions must be requested at the Diploma approval stage
- Exemptions are allowed for learners who have an appropriate GCSE at grade C or above against level 2 credits in:
    - Communication
    - Mathematics
    - Science
- Learners registered on a Diploma where exemptions are not approved cannot be exempted for any credits. (Please check the Rules of Combination on your Diplomas)
- In total a maximum of 6 credits may be exempted against any single GCSE with a maximum of 9 credits at Level 2.

7.2.2 Level 3 Exemptions
Learners with a recognised qualification (other than a credit based qualification at level 3 such as an A level) are eligible to claim exemption from some units in the Open Awards Access to HE Diploma.

- **No more than 50%** of the credits required for any named Diploma may be awarded through exemption.
- Credits achieved by exemption do not attract grades and therefore can only be considered towards ungraded units.

7.3 Credit Transfer of Equivalent Units

Learners who have achieved Access to HE Diploma credits from another AVA may wish to claim credits towards an Open Awards Diploma.

If a student transfers from one named Diploma to another (either within or between AVAs), credits already achieved may be transferred if:
- The credits are derived from units that are equivalent to an Open Awards unit which is acceptable within the rules of combination for the named Diploma to which the student is transferring.
- There are no more than a maximum of 50% of the units of any Diploma being achieved in this way.

Equivalent Units can be claimed as long as they have been achieved within the last 5 years and have been achieved since the introduction of the QAA Grading Scheme.

How do you do this? The Exemptions and Equivalence Request form (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/) must be completed at the beginning of a learner's course and should form part of their individual learning plan.

The Exemptions and Equivalence Request Form;
- Must be received by the Open Awards team for consideration no later than the last working day in **October**
- Will be reviewed by a Quality and Compliance Officer before being formally considered for approval by the Access to HE Committee at its **November** meeting
- The committee's decision will be final
- The decision will be communicated to you within two weeks of the consideration meeting

Please email completed exemptions and equivalent request forms to quality@openawards.org.uk

8. Internal Verification

Develop Sampling & Standardisation Plan → Complete Pre-Delivery Verification → Complete Post-Delivery Verification → Complete Action Plan → Participate in Standardisation Activities
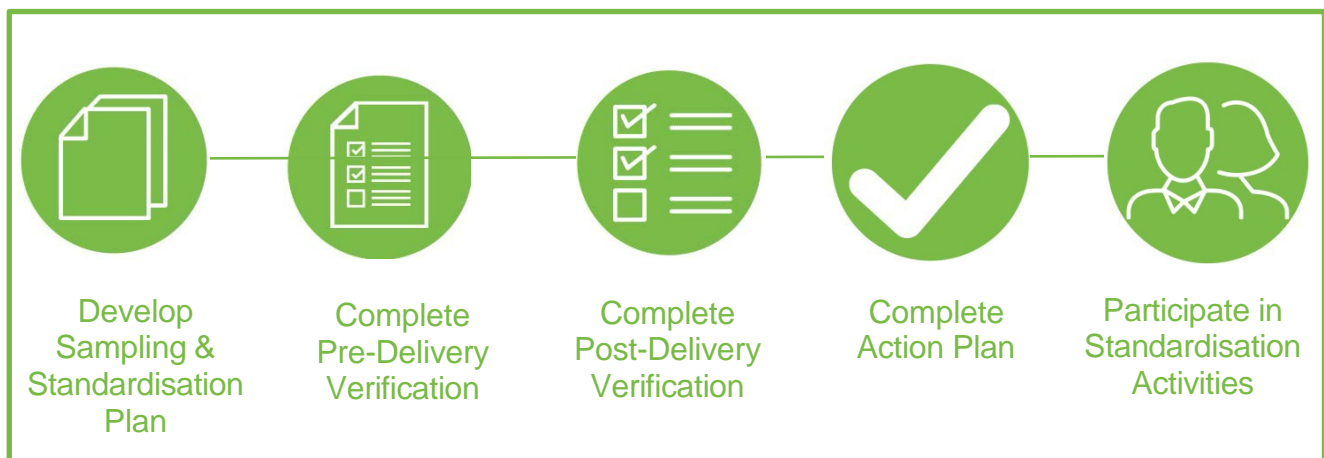
The main purpose of Internal Verification is to improve and standardise practice in the assessment of learners. The Internal Verifier can identify where best practice is being used and where there are concerns that require action

8.1 Who is responsible for Internal Verification

You, as the Open Award's Provider, will be expected to take responsibility for Internal Verification at your organisation. We would also expect that you have the appropriate levels of resources to implement the Internal Verification process.

As well as the knowledge level to understand the Access to HE specification, criterion-referenced assessment and the Access grading scheme, the Internal Verifier will also be expected to have relevant subject expertise at an appropriate level.

8.2 Scope and Purpose of Internal Verification

Internal Verification ensures that:

- Assessment assignments are checked and revised if necessary before they are delivered to learners
- All assessments are carried out according to the requirements of the QAA specification and grading scheme and adhere to the principles described in this handbook
- Decisions made about assessments, including indicated grades, are fair and equitable and represent the achievement of the learners

8.3 Planning Internal Verification and Standardisation Activities

In preparation for the Annual Compliance Monitoring visit, a written proposal for your Internal Verification and Standardisation activities should be submitted to your Lead Moderator in advance via the visit planner.

This should include:
- Name of the person with overall responsibility for Internal Verification for the Access provision as a whole
- Names and responsibilities of those appointed as Internal Verifiers, for example, the proposal should outline the units and groups of learners for which individual verifiers have responsibility and any coordination roles, e.g. for Diplomas in a particular pathway
- A schedule for verification, including pre-delivery and post-delivery verification and standardisation activities
- Details of the system used to select samples of assessment evidence for verification and standardisation

8.4 Internal Verification Documents

All Internal Verification activities are expected to be recorded on the prescribed Open Awards form, which can be accessed on the Open Awards website (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/)
These forms should be saved electronically as Lead and Pathway Moderators may request to see them at any time.
The **Internal Verification Record** is the mandatory document which should be used for Internal Verification. This form covers all stages of verification:
- Pre-delivery Verification for a graded or ungraded unit (including Developmental units)
- Verification of Achievement
- Action Planning

8.5 Pre-Delivery Verification

Pre-delivery Verification of Assessment ensures that the strategy you use in order to assess learners' performance is fit for purpose and provides the learners' with all the necessary information.

It is vital that this takes place **before** the start of the course **and** when any significant changes are made to the strategy, e.g. when new assignments are written.

At this stage the following documents must be submitted to the Internal Verifier:
- Assessment plan
- Copy of the Unit of Assessment (downloaded from the Open Awards Unit Bank)
- Completed copy of the Assignment Brief and Feedback sheet (including all tasks)

Outcomes are reported by the Internal Verifier using the Internal Verification Record. For guidance on completing the form, please refer to the Access to HE Section of the Open Awards Website under FAQs (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/faqs/).

8.6 Verification of Achievement

Verification of Achievement is to ensure that the evidence presented by learners is assessed and graded in accordance with the QAA regulations (www.qaa.ac.uk/en). We would expect there be ongoing Internal Verification activity to ensure that the evidence for each unit, which is part of a Diploma, is verified as soon as is practicable after assessment has taken place. This should ensure that any problems involving the practice of a particular assessor are highlighted as soon as possible in order to give sufficient time to take any remedial action before the assessor formally assesses other subsequent units.

At this stage the following document samples must be submitted to the Internal Verifier:
- Evidence assessed by each assessor
- Evidence from every unit, including ungraded and developmental units
- For graded units, evidence representing a range of recommended grades and grade profiles

It is important that the sample selected should be representative **not** random.

Although we do not specify the percentage size of evidence you are to submit to the Internal Verifier for sampling, we do expect that the sample is a fair reflection of:
- The number and size of groups assessed
- The range of grades and grade profiles recommended by the assessor – this should include a Pass, Merit and Distinction for each cohort sampled. The sample should also include examples where grade profiles are balance, e.g. PPDD, or 'borderline

cases' where similar profiles result in different aggregated grades, e.g. PPMMM and PPPMM (in this case the indication of a single grade means the difference between a Pass and Merit for the Unit)

- The demographic features of learners (gender, ethnic background, age and disability status)
- The modes of delivery (i.e. Classroom Delivery, Blended and Distance Learning)
- Any overarching provider policies relating to quality assurance and Internal Verification (for example, some providers require that every learner has some assessment evidence included in an Internal Verification sample at some point during their course of study)
- Experience of the assessor (i.e. the sample for new assessors must be greater until the Internal Verifier is assured that they are assessing consistently with other assessors involved in the assessment of learners on a Diploma)
- Implementation of a new assessment strategy / assignment
- Actions identified in previous Internal Verification reports
- Please note that evidence from every unit must be included in the Internal Verification sample for each delivery cycle of a Diploma and must include all the assignments or tasks used for assessment of the Unit. Furthermore, all assessors must have a sample of their work internally verified

8.7 Internal Verification Record

The Internal Verification Record is intended to reflect the Internal Verification activity for an individual assessors and named units of assessment. Internal Verification should consider all of the assignments used to assess a unit.

Internal Verifier must record for each learner in the sample:

- The learner's name
- Title of Diploma
- The grade recommended for the learner by the assessor (this is the aggregated grade)
- The application of QAA and Open Awards regulations in the assessment of each learner's work and the recording of achievement
- Whether there is good practice to share or action to be taken to improve assessment and record keeping

Check list for information to include in your Internal Verification Record:

- **Assignment Brief Sheet**: Have you fully completed the Assignment Brief Sheet and are you happy that all information is accurate?
- **Feedback Sheet**: Have you fully completed the Feedback Sheet and are you happy that all information is accurate?
- **Checking:** Are you confident that there is sufficient evidence that the learner has met all the assessment criterial for the unit?
- **Grading**: Has all assessment criteria been met? Was the work submitted by the agreed deadline? To assess cases where there may be an indication of over grading or under grading, consider the grade profiles for each unit; are the grade profiles consistent for different units and different assessors for the same cohort and stage in the course?
- **Agreement:** Does the Internal Verifier agree with the assessment decision of the assessor?
- **Numerical Marking*** - If this has been used, has this been applied appropriately using the grade boundaries for Merit and Distinction grades published on the Assignment Brief and Feedback sheet and for the appropriate grade descriptors (GD1 and / or GD3)?

*The consistent awarding of "flat" grade profiles by an assessor (PPP, MMM or DDD) might be an indication that the numerical mark is being used to determine all the grades for the assignment. For further guidance please see the Annex C1 on page 9 of Section C of the QAA Grading scheme handbook (http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Documents/Grading-scheme-A.pdf).
Good practice should be shared through the scheduled meetings of the course team and internal standardisation.

8.8 Late Submissions

If work is handed in late at any stage, the grade given must be capped at a **Pass**. Handing in work late constitutes:

- Work handed in later than the first submission deadline without an agreed extension,
- Work handed in after an agreed extension date
- Work handed in later than a resubmission deadline
- Incomplete work (if you have a clear policy relating to this eventuality)

8.9 Feedback to the Learner

All feedback provided should be sufficient, focused and developmental. It should provide justification for the grades recommended.

There are two sections for feedback.
- **Graded Units**

Feedback against the grade descriptors should reflect the specific elements selected for each descriptor and any guidance that may have been provided on the Assignment Brief and Feedback sheet. The feedback should give examples where the learners work provides evidence for the recommended grade and be developmental, in the sense that it shows the learner how they might have improved their submission to achieve a higher grade and how this might be achieved in subsequent assignments.

- **Ungraded Units**

Feedback against achievement of the assessment criteria should reflect achievement following a first submission. If all the assessment criteria have been met it may be sufficient for the assessor to write, for example "Well done, you have met all of the assessment criteria and your work is eligible for grading."

8.10 Best Practice

We expect that you are using Open Awards documentation and follow our processes for the development of assessment activities, assessment, standardisation and Internal Verification. Examples of exceptional practice, which an Internal Verifier could comment on include
- Detailed, developmental feedback
- Consistent and accurate completion of administrative details Assignment Brief and Feedback sheet
- Maintenance of Electronic Markbook

8.11 Areas for Improvement

The Internal Verifier must provide useful and constructive feedback to both support and encourage improvement. This should take the form of specific actions to correct error and/or deficiencies.

Some examples of such feedback are provided on the following table:

Issue Identified	Possible Action (IV Comments)
Incomplete records - Assignment Brief and Feedback sheet, Electronic Markbook	Highlight any specific problems and provide a timescale for correction of deficiencies.
Inaccuracies in grade aggregation	Highlight errors and arrange for corrections to be made and checked.
Errors in marking, e.g. where inaccuracies in learner work has not been corrected, or where an assessor has made an inaccurate comment	Highlight inaccuracies and arrange for additional marking /commenting of learner work.
Where numerical marking is being used, inaccuracies in totalling or percentage calculations	Highlight errors and action plan for correction of errors and checking.
Cases where the verifier considers the assessor has been too lenient or too harsh in the grades recommended	Highlight discrepancies, justifying their own decision. Arrange to meet the assessor to discuss and agree standards.
Poor feedback that lacks a developmental imperative or does not relate to the Grade Descriptors or grade descriptor components	Highlight deficiencies. Arrange a meeting to discuss deficiencies. Share examples of best practice.

Issue Identified	Possible Action (IV Comments)

9. Moderation

| Lead Moderator Assigned to each Provider | Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit | Pathway Moderation Appointment | Interim & Final Moderation Visits Take Place | Final Awards Board |

9.1 Your Moderator Team

We will appoint a team of Moderators which is made up of a **Lead Moderator** and **Pathway Moderators** each year.

Lead Moderator

- Takes an overview of all your Open Awards provisions
- Monitors Compliance
- Agrees Provider Moderation Dates
- Identifies the need for specific specialist Pathway Moderator support.
- Attends the Final Awards Board meeting

Pathway Moderator

- Undertakes the external moderation of all courses within their allocated pathways
- Reports to Open Awards and the Lead Moderator
- Monitors grade decisions made for units to ensure proper grading processes were followed
- Ensures grading across different tutors and modes of delivery is consistent and is in accordance with the QAA grading Scheme Handbook
- Ensures Award of Credit is accurate

• Annual Moderation Cycle 2017-2018

Autumn term (Year of Run)	Date
The Lead Moderator will make contact with the Access Coordinator/Senior Manager to agree a date for the Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit, to take place by **27th October 2017.** The initial visit will include Annual Compliance Monitoring against the provider validation requirements and identification of an Annual Risk Rating.	**By 27th October 2017**
Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit takes place: - The Lead Moderator will explore the quality assurance arrangements for the pathways and agree a date for The Final Awards Board meeting. The date will be between 2nd – 13th July 2018. - Where you are offering courses with start/end dates in addition to the usual annual moderation cycle – the additional dates and requirements for a further Final Awards Board will be agreed at the Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit. - On the day of the visit, the Lead Moderator will provide an action plan, clearly identifying any actions (or suggestions for improvement) to be addressed.	**By 27th October 2017**
The Annual Compliance Monitoring Report will be issued to the Access Coordinator/ Senior Manager/Quality Manager	**17th November 2017**
Spring Term	
Pathway Moderators will make contact with the Access Co-coordinator/Senior Manager/Quality Manager and agree a date for the Interim Pathway Moderation Visit to take place by **9th February 2018**	**9th February 2018**
Pathway Moderators undertake Interim pathway moderation visits - Pathway Moderators will agree a date for Final Moderation Visit. This will be during the last two weeks in June.	**9th February 2018**

The Interim Moderation Reports will be issued to the Access Coordinator/ Senior Manager/Quality Manager	**2nd March 2018**
Summer Term	
Pathway Moderators will undertake Final Pathway Moderation visit and verify the Award of Credit to learners via the Open Awards Portal.	**18th – 29th June 2018**
Lead Moderator will attend the Final Awards Board and ratify awards of credit. See preparation for the FAB documents. http://openawards.org.uk/access-to- he/access-to-he-administration/	**2nd – 13th July 2018**
We will processes certificates and dispatch to you by recorded delivery. Please note: If RAC's are received after 13th July, we cannot guarantee confirmation of learner results to UCAS by the data submission deadline of 1st August.	**27th July 2018**
Results will be uploaded to UCAS on 1st August	**1st August 2018**
We will issue the Access Coordinator/ Senior Manager/Quality Manager a copy of the final moderation reports	**27th July 2018**

9.3 Arrangements for 'Roll-on-Roll-Off' Provision

If the start and end dates of specific provision do not coincide with the usual academic year, then the pattern of moderation visits will need to reflect the timing of individual course runs. This may result in the need for additional Moderation visits and more than one Final Awards Board in any calendar year.

These arrangements will be discussed with you by the Lead Moderator and confirmed at the Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit.

The Moderation Cycle above clearly outlines the moderation events and key dates.

9.4 Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit – Lead Moderator

The purpose of the visit is to:

- Review the scope of a provider's Access provision
- Monitor compliance against the Provider Validation criteria

- Review progress against any action plans in place
- Determine the provider's Annual Risk Rating.

Before the Visit: You will be given a visit planner to complete in advance, which identifies all the documentation which needs to be available for the visit. The evidence may be provided in either printed or electronic format.

Please refer to the Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit Planner for evidence to be presented located on the Open Awards secure portal (https://portal.openawards.org.uk/LogIn.aspx).

During the Visit: The Lead Moderator will discuss any areas of concerns with you and produce an Action Plan indicating steps to be taken and the timescale for their implementation.

Once the Action Plan has been agreed, a copy will be left with you at the end of the visit

After the Visit: A report will be produced for you, which will include any actions required and highlight examples of particular good practice.

9.5 Pathway Moderator Activities

Each Pathway Moderator will normally visit twice during the year, once in the **Spring (Interim Moderation Visit)** and again in the **Summer (Final Moderation Visit)**, before the Final Awards Board.

Before the Visits: At least 5 working days before their planned visit, the Pathway Moderator will access the Electronic Markbook for the units already delivered and assessed. This is to allow sufficient time for the Moderator to select a sample and for you to assemble the sample. The Moderator will select a representative sample and make a request for the sample to be made available either at their visit or electronically in advance of the visit. For this reason it is important that the Markbook is regularly updated throughout the year.

The Moderator will externally scrutinise the selected samples to assure the grades awarded and the Recommended Award of Credit is sound. Additional samples of learners work may be requested.

During their Visits:

Pathway Moderators will require a sample of evidence of assessment and associated assessment and internal verification records.

And for each Diploma in the Pathway:

- updated copy of the Markbook
- schemes of work
- assessment strategies/plan
- assignment briefs
- samples of marked student work showing the grade indicators awarded by the assessor
- evidence of Internal Verification which covers grading decisions (Internal Verification form, Sampling Plan)
- Provider tracking sheets which show how the unit grades were arrived at;
- Standardisation activity

The Pathway Moderator will discuss any areas of concern with you and produce an Action Plan indicating steps to be taken and the timescale for their implementation. The Action Plan will be agreed and a copy left with you at the end of the visit.

9.6 Additional Monitoring Visits and Sanctions

If you were to not meet the obligations of your Validation as a Provider and/or fail to address areas of concern highlighted by the moderation team within their Action Plans and Reports, we reserve the right to request additional visits to monitor your activities. As part of such monitoring activities your risk rating can be reviewed within year.

Please note: You may be charged for these additional visits. A complete overview of pricings for visits, as well as additional visits, can be found on our website www.openawards.org.uk

10. Standardisation

'In the context of assessment, this describes the process through which those involved in assessment develop a shared understanding of the standard of student achievement that will be assessed as meeting the requirements of the assessment outcomes available. (In the context of Access to HE pass and grades of merit or distinction.) Such assessment decisions cannot be made in a way that is reliable and valid unless the underpinning assessment structures (unit design, assessment design and so on) are of the highest quality, so standardisation of these aspects of the assessment infrastructure to ensure their quality is also a key component to be addressed'.

QAA October 2016

10.1 Aims and Purpose of Standardisation

Standardisation is a vital component of any robust quality assurance system and as a condition of provider approval all approved Open Awards Access Provider organisations agree to participate in standardisation activities.

The Aims of Standardisation are to:
- ensure the consistency of the award of credit to students across different assessors/moderators/modes of delivery/provider and to agree the standards to be achieved.
- compare the assessment strategy and planned assessment tasks used across a unit/s to ensure that they:
    1. allow for the generation of sufficient/appropriate/authentic evidence to be produced
    2. give fair access to assessment and prevent any barriers to achievement
    3. respect for equality and diversity issues
- ensure that the assessment tasks are written in language that is appropriate to the level and are free from bias
- ensure consistency in the assessment judgements made by assessors on the available evidence
- ensure that adequate constructive feedback is given students
- ensure that adequate constructive feedback is given to assessors which demonstrates the robustness of the internal moderation of the assessment judgements and

identify and share best practices

The Purpose of Standardisation is to:
- promote and achieve consistency of assessment and moderation practice
- ensure consistency in the application of level and credit across open awards Access provision
- identify and develop agreed points of reference by which standards can be referenced and agree processes for them to be applied and reviewed
- ensure that a full range of assessment activities allow for the generation of appropriate assessment evidence

- inform the quality improvement cycle by identifying training and development issues
- share and disseminate best practices

Open Awards standardisation strategy for Access to HE provision will ensure that assessment is consistent and accurate standards are being applied and maintained across all provision.

The development of robust standardisation processes for Access to HE provision, which can be applied both within providers and nationally, will provide the evidence of consistent practice. The process outlined in this handbook will ensure that standards are comparable across:
- providers (and satellite sites)
- different types of providers (colleges / private providers)
- different subject areas
- modes of delivery (blended / distance learning)
- …..and over time.

As a minimum requirement each provider must:
- Plan and undertake standardisation of internally set tasks and the outcomes of internal Assessment (at least twice a year)
- Contribute assessed material to open awards standardisation activities and events upon the request of open awards Access to HE staff.
- Allow subject specialist staff to participate in and attend standardisation activities organised by Open Awards

Types of Standardisation Activities

10.2.1 Provider Standardisation (Internal Standardisation)

Where there is more than one tutor / assessor delivering the same Diploma course or similar courses and making assessment decisions and recommendations for the award of credit to learners it is essential that the internal verification process includes an opportunity for the standardisation of their practice.

The internal verifier/moderator for the course(s) has the responsibility for arranging and facilitating standardisation events. Guidance for planning and conducting internal standardisation events and exercises is outlined in this handbook.

As part of compliance monitoring activities, Open Awards may review Provider standardisation activities via scheduled spot checks.

10.2.2 Regional Standardisation

We will provide subject specialist standardisation events during the academic year and subject specialists from each Provider will be invited to attend these events.

You will be asked to provide copies of assignment briefs and samples of completed graded and ungraded assignments in order to facilitate these events. Moderators will collect these samples when they visit to carry out pathway moderation.

These events are designed to be very supportive and all assignments used for standardisation will be anonymised. The events are also a great opportunity to network with peers.

10.21.3 E-Standardisation

Alongside the 'Live' standardisation events, Open Awards offers online standardisation activities. Your centre will be provided with a Moodle login password, which will give you access to the standardisation activities, training and opportunities to share best practices.
https://openawardsaccess.moodlecloud.com

10.2.4 National Standardisation/ Inter-AVA Standardisation

Samples of learners evidence of achievement used for regional standardisation will be made available for national standardisation events as appropriate. Open Awards supports working

with other awarding organisations to raise quality standards and assure that specified levels of attainment for a qualification are consistent and reliable. It is the aim of Open Awards to facilitate an inter-AVA standardisation event this year (2017-18).

Outcomes for all national and inter-AVA standardisation activities will be reported to you through the dissemination of:
- A standardisation report
- Exemplars/ Sharing of best practices

10.2.5 Moderator Standardisation

External moderators will be required to identify and collect, during the course of moderation, evidence/examples of:
- unit assessment plans and assignment briefs
- assessed work graded at pass, merit and distinction (to include 'typical' and borderline grades)

Assessment plans and assignment briefs will be used to allow moderators to compare assessment demands across provision. Assessed work will be used in standardisation activities. Such activities include comparison and discussion in subject 'clusters' during moderator training and agreeing excellent practice to disseminate across provision.
Please note that the standardisation activities for each level are related and will influence, and be influenced, by the outcomes of each other.

For further information regarding Standardisation, please refer to the Provider Standardisation Handbook (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/) and the Open Awards Standardisation Policy and Procedure.

11. Final Awards Board

Final Awards Board dates are scheduled during the Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit

Mark book uploaded to the portal for the Final Awards Board

Final Awards Board takes place between 3-14th July*

Minutes of the Final Awards Board sent to Open Awards within 5 working days from the date for the board

* Courses starting in September. Where courses start at allocated times of the academic year, additional FAB dates will be arranged with the lead moderator.

11.1 What does the Final Awards Board do?

The Final Awards Board (FAB) is a formal meeting which must take place at the end of the Diploma course following all external moderation activity. It:

- Approves the Award of Credit, grades and Access to HE Diplomas
- Ensures the provider's ongoing adherence to the QAA licensing criteria
- Confirms the provider's approval status with Open Awards for the next academic year
- Considers cases of misconduct, extenuating circumstances and appeals.

The FAB must be constituted by the following roles:

Member	Role
Chair	Manager from your team with responsibility for Access to Higher Education, e.g. the Access Coordinator, Curriculum Manager or the Quality Manager.
Scribe	Supplied by you to formally minute the meeting using the template provided by Open Awards.

Lead Moderator	- Confirms assessment judgements. - Confirm ongoing adherence to the QAA licensing criteria which will have been scrutinised over the course of the annual moderation cycle. They will review any actions set, check they have been completed, or that there is a clear action plan in place for their completion. They will then confirm the provider's status as an Open Awards Access to HE Diploma provider for the next academic year.

AVA Representative	- Confirms due process
	- Note feedback from the Annual Provider Survey
	- Record candidates nominated for the Keith Fletcher Award
	Please note that you will now be requested to supply your ILR data for this board.
	You will be asked questions which will specifically focus on:
	   - Success rates in line with SFA data
	   - Trends in data
	   - Progression data
	   - Impact of different learner characteristics

Course Representative:	Course tutor with day-to-day responsibility for coordinating the Diploma.

Please note: The Chair and Scribe cannot be the same person.

For more detailed information about roles of the FAB attendees, the agenda for the FAB and further supporting information please see the Final Awards Board guidance on the Open Awards website. (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/) Open Awards provide one-to-one support sessions for providers to help you prepare for the FAB if you feel that you need further support. Please contact the Access to HE team at ahed@openawards.org.uk if you feel that you would benefit from this service.

11.2 Agenda for Final Awards Board

The Final Awards Board must be conducted by the Chair using the agenda published on our website http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/

The Final Awards Board considers and confirms the following:
- Learners for whom achievement of the named Diploma is being claimed. This includes those who fully meet the Rules of Combination for the Diploma, those achieving through agreed Credit Transfer, Aegrotat awards and Posthumous awards
- Learners for whom a referral has already been requested within the duration of the course or for whom referral is being requested at the Final Awards Board
- Learners for whom partial achievement is being claimed
- Cases involving academic misconduct, extenuating circumstances or appeals
- Ongoing provider approval as an Access to HE provider
- Consideration of feedback from you and Lead/Pathway Moderators Review your data in relation to:
  - Success rates
  - Trends
  - Progression
  - Demographics
- Feedback from Annual Provider Survey
- Identification of candidates for the Keith Fletcher Memorial Prize (see page 65).

A standard Agenda is available and **must be followed**.

11.3 Minutes of the Awards Board

The proceedings of the Final Awards Board are recorded using the minutes template available on our website. The minutes are completed by the scribe during the meeting and signed by the Chair, the Scribe and the Lead Moderator.

Completed minutes must be returned to us by **no later than five working days** after the Final Awards Board. You may have a number of Diploma courses to approve at the FAB but you do not need to complete a set of minutes for each course run. However a separate set of minutes must be completed for each pathway.

11.4 Achievement for a Named Access to HE Diploma

The Diploma is awarded for all learners who the Final Awards Board considers have fully met the specific Rules of Combination for a named Diploma and those who have not fully met the Rules of Combination but for whom an Aegrotat or Posthumous award is being requested.

11.5 Aegrotat Awards

An Aegrotat award may be requested for learners who, due to extenuating circumstances, have been unable to complete their Access to HE Diploma course **and** who have achieved at least 30 of the credits required for the Access to HE Diploma.

Requests are to be made by completion of the 'Request for Aegrotat Award' form (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/) and returned, with evidence to quality@openawards.org.uk **before the final pathway moderation**.

If the extenuating circumstances occur after this date, the form should be completed and sent to us before the date of the Final Awards Board meeting.

Please note: Requests cannot be considered at the Final Awards Board meeting.

Consent must be obtained from the learner for the evidence to be viewed by the Lead Moderator.

For confidentiality purposes the learner should be identified on the request form by their Open Awards Registration Number/ Learner ID, rather than name.

Any affected learner must be informed that, if the Aegrotat is approved that:

- their Diploma certificate will clearly state that it is an Aegrotat award
- their Credit Transcript will list only the units that have been achieved
- the implications that this may have for any current HE offers or subsequent HE application

11.6 Posthumous Award

A posthumous award may be made at the discretion of the Final Awards Board provided that the request is supported by the next of kin of the learner.

Requests should be directed to quality@openawards.org.uk

11.7 Referral Requests

It is anticipated that most referral requests will have been considered **in advance** of the Final

Awards Board, within the duration of the course. The Final Awards Board will receive details of such requests and their outcomes.

If the need for a referral request comes to light near to end of the course run, then the request may be made at the final pathway moderation and approved at the Final Awards Board using the Referral at FAB form available on our website (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/) Copies of the form(s) are to be forwarded to Open Awards with the Minutes of the Final Awards Board meeting.

11.8 Partial Achievement

Partial achievement should be claimed for learners who have not fully met the specific Rules of Combination for a named Diploma, where an Aegrotat award or extension request has not been approved and for whom there has been no request for referral to the Final Awards Board. Such learners will receive a Credit Transcript only.

11.9 Other Extenuating Circumstances

The Final Awards Board will consider any cases where extenuating circumstances have affected a learner's performance in more than one area or in a way that falls outside the provider's normal procedures. In such cases the specific circumstances must have been considered by the course team and Lead/Pathway Moderator(s) prior to the Final Awards Board. Cases must be fully documented with a recommendation to the Final Awards Board on whether each individual claim for extenuating circumstances should be supported and to what degree.

11.10 Reporting Academic Misconduct

Cases of academic misconduct **must** be reported to the Lead Moderator and will be reported to the Final Awards Board. Please refer to section 11.

11.11 Appeals on Awards

The grounds for appeal about the Award of Credits or grades on the Access to HE Diploma are restricted to cases where:

11.11.1   there is evidence of administrative or procedural error

11.11.2   there are extenuating circumstances that, for good reason, could not be notified prior

to the Final Awards Board

Please note: Suggested learner grades must be subjected to external moderation and are therefore not confirmed until Final Awards Board has taken place.

12. Malpractice and Maladministration

12.1 The Difference between Malpractice and Maladministration

- **Malpractice**

Malpractice can be defined as any act, default or practice which is in breach of QAA Regulations

- **Maladministration**

Maladministration specifically means any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in a provider not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualifications as set out in the guidance.

It is your responsibility to report any allegation of suspected malpractice/maladministration to us. If you do not do this we may apply sanctions as set out in the Open Awards Sanction Policy, which can be found on the Access to HE Section of our website www.openawards.org.uk.

12.2 Sanctions

In order for us to meet our regulatory responsibilities, we are required to share certain information relating to the imposition of sanctions with other Awarding Organisations and the Regulators. This may impact upon your ability to deliver qualifications with other Awarding Organisations.

 In order to safeguard the award of credit and ensure high-quality, we can apply sanctions to:
- individual staff
- provider as a whole
- candidates

The level of sanction imposed will depend on the nature of non-compliance. If previously-imposed sanctions are not acted upon within any timeframes set, and/or in the case of repeated actions requiring sanctions, this will result in a higher level sanction being applied. In very serious cases of breach of provider non-compliance, we may withdraw approval to deliver qualifications and units. It is therefore vital that you comply with all sanctions.

Please note: In the event of sanctions, you will be charge for any addition visits.

12.2.1 Appeals against Sanctions

Providers, their Staff and Learners have the right to appeal against any sanction which has been imposed. Appeals received by Open awards will acknowledge within 5 working days. Full details about our appeals process is described in the Compliment, Comments and Complaints Policy which can be found on the Access to HE Section of our website www.openawards.org.uk

12.3 AcademicMisconduct

It is important that all cases of academic misconduct are documented and reported to the Lead Moderator **and** to the Final Awards Board.

Your policies and procedures for dealing with academic misconduct will be checked during the Provider Validation / Revalidation process and be reviewed annually by the Lead External Moderator as part of the Annual Compliance Monitoring Visit.

Please refer to QAA Grade scheme handbook, section E (page 5), for further details regarding Academic Misconduct.

(http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Documents/Quick-Guide-Grading-12.pdf)

12.4 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the action of passing off the work/evidence of another learner or source as the learner's own work/evidence.

Whilst it is common and often necessary for learners to learn from the work of others (e.g. academic staff, fellow learners and published materials), it is equally essential that learners always acknowledge the source of their ideas and information they use in their work that is not their own.

Learners should be made aware of your Plagiarism Policy and Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, and receive information on the commonly used acceptable conventions for correctly acknowledging the source of ideas and information as part of their course induction.

Where tests are used as an assessment method, it is good practice to rotate/randomise the test questions for cohorts, have a bank of tests to draw upon, and to not use the same test for two consecutive periods.

You may consider implementing a declaration that learners sign to confirm that the work/evidence is their own work.

You may also consider gaining access to plagiarism detection software which can be used as part of their assignment submission police or used to regularly run randomised checks on pieces of work to test for possible instances of plagiarism

In terms of handling suspected plagiarism, you should investigate the case following your published malpractice and maladministration or plagiarism policy and notify Open Awards of the outcome of the investigation.

Open awards may implement its published Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and impose a sanction(s) applied to the learner, as necessary, in line with Open Awards Sanction Policy.

Open Awards expects that most cases will be resolved internally. However, if this matter has still not been resolved, the case may be reported to Open Awards for adjudication.

12.5 Conflict of Interest

It is our policy that those acting on our behalf must be free from conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment, objectivity or loyalty to the organisation in conducting Open Awards' activities and assignments.

Moderators are required to always disclose an activity that may represent a conflict of interest. Likewise you are required to notify us of any foreseen conflicts of interest.

Common Conflicts of Interest include:
- The moderator is or was employed by the provider (or has been employed at any time within the last 3 years) – e.g. as a Lecturer or another capacity.
- The moderator is known to be undertaking external verification/moderation activity for, or on behalf of, other awarding organisations/AVA at the same provider.
- The moderator is, or was, a recent learner/student at the provider.
- The moderator is known to hold a position with any receiving institution (e.g. involvement in the admissions decisions process).

13. How to Administer the Access to HE Diploma

There are a number of processes to follow and deadlines to meet to ensure that you are prepared for the administration of Access to HE Diplomas. Some of these processes are closely linked to Quality Assurance so you will find additional supporting information in other sections of this handbook.

We also provide a 'Secure Portal Guide' to help you navigate our portal. Links are included in this section to the appropriate area of the Secure Portal Guide. Additionally, all of these documents can be found on the Access to HE section of the Open Awards website (www.openawards.org.uk).

13.1 Registered Access to HE Contacts at your Centre

It is important that you nominate the appropriate contacts at your centre for the following roles so that we can ensure that all information is communicated to the correct person:

- **Access to HE Coordinator:** This is usually a senior Access to HE manager who has responsibility for all Access to HE provision at your centre. Any curriculum or quality assurance based information or queries will be directed towards this person. Some Administration queries will also be directed to this person.

- **Access to HE Administrator**: All administration and course-related queries and information will be directed to this person. They will also be included in some of the curriculum correspondence. It is expected that this person will coordinate all Access to HE Administration at your centre. You may choose to have more than one Administrator, usually for additional portal accounts (Additional Portal Users) but we will ask for the main contact. Certificates are always sent to this person and the site where the Access to HE Administrator is based as recorded with Open Awards as the correspondence address.

- **Access to HE Finance Contact:** All invoicing and finance queries will be directed to this person.

Please see our Privacy Notice for details on how we use, store and protect all personal information collected by Open Awards for our legitimate business interests.

13.2 Secure Portal Accounts

A portal account is allocated to the Access to HE Administrator at your centre. Additional portal accounts can be provided however, care should be taken to ensure that control of

learner and course information is monitored centrally. Please note that by logging onto the secure portal, you are accepting the Terms and Conditions of use. These Terms and Conditions can be found on the log in screen when you input your credentials.

13.3 The Access to HE Administration Cycle – Check List

The Access to HE Administration Cycle below provides a list of tasks to be completed throughout an Access to HE course. This is reissued each September to Access to HE Coordinators and Administrators at your centre.

The checklist below has been provided to aid you in the administration of running your Access to HE courses (for courses starting in September 2017). It should be used in conjunction with this Handbook and the Access to HE Portal Guidance, both of which can be found on the Open Awards website (www.openawards.org.uk).

Monthly Administration Tasks

Sept		
	Begin to collate your lists of learners for each Diploma course. You may wish to have several course runs/cohorts for a single Diploma course.	
	Ensure that all learner names are spelled correctly and all details are correct.	
	As part of their Individual Learning Plan, discuss with each learner any possible Level 2 exemptions (GCSE A*-C) or other appropriate level 3 qualifications that can be used to exempt units and complete and submit the relevant form (Exemptions and Equivalence Request Form) for level 3 exemptions by the **last working day of October.** Guidance on this and learners who have credits achieved from the previous diploma specification can be found in another section of this handbook.	
	Learners who are studying over two years should be registered on a two-year course run.	
	Be mindful of the UCAS application deadlines for your learners. Learners must be registered on the correct Access to HE Diploma course before the UCAS deadline **regardless of the 6 week registration deadline.**	
	Please Note: Changes cannot be made to a course run or learners added from **12 weeks** after the start date of the course run. Also, learners cannot be withdrawn from course runs after **6 weeks** from	

	course run start date. Transfers between courses in the 6-12 week period will incur an administration fee.	
Oct	The first UCAS deadline is in October. Learners who have to apply by this time must also be registered with Open Awards in accordance with QAA guidance.	
	Learners should be registered with Open Awards and checked within 6 weeks of the start date of the course run.	
	Any requests for exemptions must be submitted to ahed@openawards.org.uk by 31st October.	
Nov	Use the **Course Run Confirmation Report** to check that all learners are on the correct course. Ensure any changes to course runs have been submitted before the end of the 12 week point (12 weeks from start date of course run).	
Dec	The 12 week registration period ends in December for most course runs beginning in September. All learners must be registered on the correct course runs by this time. **Learners cannot be added after this point.**	
	Begin to enter results as soon as possible using the Markbook facility via the Open Awards portal.	
Jan		
Feb		
Mar		
Apr	Continue to ensure that results are accurately entered.	☐
	Ensure there are sufficient members of staff to check the results ready for the Final Awards Board (FAB). Any changes to the award of credit post FAB have to be reported to QAA.	
May	Submit any requests for learner extensions before the Final Pathway Moderation visit to Open Awards.	
June	Complete, thoroughly check and submit results to Open Awards via the portal after the final pathway moderation ready for the FAB. You may wish to review the proposed results with the learner and ask them to confirm them using the **Access to HE Results Confirmation** which can be generated from the course run on the secure portal.	

13.4 Learner Registrations

Access to HE learners should be registered with the correct details and on the correct Diploma via the Open Awards Secure Portal (https://portal.openawards.org.uk/LogIn.aspx) within 6 weeks of the course run start date. Additional learners can be added up until 12 weeks from the start date.

Learner data can be submitted using the provided LRF (Access to HE) template or via a report generated from your own MIS system. The data provided must be in accordance with the Access to the HE Data Specification document which is available via the secure portal.

Please note that learners must be registered with Open Awards within the UCAS deadline for their intended route of study if it falls before the 6 week deadline.

13.4.1 Fair Processing and Extended Privacy Notices

As an awarding body we have a responsibility under the Data Protection Act to ensure that learners are informed of how their information is processed and shared. Please ensure you make learners aware that their information will be passed to Open Awards for registration purposes. You should also provide a copy of the Privacy Notice – Learner Information to your learners so that they understand what data we hold about them, why we hold it and how their data is used.

We strongly recommend that you encourage them to visit the Learning Record Service website (https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/learning-records-service) to view the Extended Text Privacy Notice which will explain how their data may be shared.

Providers must also make learners aware that upon achievement of Qualifications and/or Qualification units - achievement details will be passed by Open Awards to The Learning Records Service for the purpose of updating their Personal Learning Record.

Learners may choose not to share their PLR data and can opt-out by contacting the LRS Customer Helpdesk on 0845 602 2589. They will need to provide some personal details to confirm their identity, which may include their Unique Learner Number (ULN), if known.

13.4.2 Checking Learner and Course Registrations

You must ensure that learners are registered with their correct legal name on the correct Diploma. Once you have registered your learners you can use the 'Course Run Confirmation' report via the secure portal (https://portal.openawards.org.uk/LogIn.aspx) to check that all

information is correct.

We recommend that you use this report whilst registering your learners and also before the 12 week deadline.

13.4.3 Withdrawing Leaners

Learners can be withdrawn via the Open Awards Secure Portal (https://portal.openawards.org.uk/LogIn.aspx) up to 6 weeks from the start date of the course run.   You will not be charged for these learners.

13.4.4 Late or Incorrect Course Registrations

Learners may be registered late or transferred to another course run between 12 and 26 weeks from the start date but only in extenuating circumstances and the appropriate request form must   be submitted to AHED@openawards.org.uk

Forms can be found on the 'Access to HE Administration' section of the website (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-administration/).

1. Request for Late Registration Form
2. Request for an Amendment to a Learner Registration

The Access to HE Late Registration Fee will be applied for late registrations and the Administration Fee will be applied for transfers. See Open Awards Fees and Charges on our website.

13.4.5 Learners on Two-Year Courses

These learners should be registered on course runs that span the 2 year period **rather than** as two separate 1-year course runs.

13.4.6 Learners with Prior Access to HE Unit Achievements

Previously achieved units that appear in the learner's current Diploma will appear in the Open Awards Markbook with the awarded grade and you cannot re-award the unit for a period of 5 years.

If it can be proven that the learner has re-learned the unit and completed new assignments,

we may approve the re-award of the unit. Such cases should be discussed with the Open Awards Access to HE Team.

Units achieved prior to September 2014 may have an equivalent version on the current Diploma specification. If the equivalent version appears in the learner's current Diploma course and was achieved within the past 5 years, the grade can be transferred to the new unit. Again, such cases should be discussed with the Open Awards Access to HE Team.

13.4.7 Learners with Exemptions

Level 2 units can only be exempted if the learner has an appropriate GCSE qualification and the unit(s) to be exempted was pre-approved for exemption on the Diploma when the Diploma was originally submitted for approval.

You can view approved exemptions on your Diplomas by generating Access to HE Provision Overview report via the secure portal (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to- he/access-to-he-portal-guidance/).

More information on Exemptions can be found in section 7 of this handbook.

Level 3 units may be exempted for individual learners but should be requested using the 'Request to use Exemptions or Equivalents and Level 3 Achievement Outside of the Exemptions and Equivalence Request form (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality- documents/). Completed forms should be sent to AHED@openawards.org.uk no later than **31st October.**

Providers should consider that exempted units are not awarded with a grade. Exempting a learner's graded unit will affect their total grade profile.

13.5 Recommending Learners for Award

13.5.1 Recording and Checking Results

As soon as all assignments on a unit have been assessed and the unit given an overall grade, the grade should be recorded on the Open Awards Markbook via the Secure Portal (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-portal-guidance/).

This means that units are added to the Markbook throughout the duration of the course. Results on the Markbook should be checked regularly for accuracy. Changes to the award of credit post certification will incur an administration fee.

Results can be entered by the Access to HE Administrator, by other approved portal user or the tutor assigned to the course run on the Open Awards portal.

Please Note: Once a portal account holder has begun entering results on a course run, all other portal users are blocked from entering or amending results for that course run.

13.5.2 Learner Checking

We recommend that you ask your learners to check their final results before submission using the 'Access to HE Results Confirmation' report (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access- to-he-portal-guidance/). You do not need to send copies of this signed confirmation to us but you should store them for future reference should the learner contest their grades once certificated

13.5.3 Moderator Access to Results

Pathway Moderators can view the results that have been recorded on the Markbook before the results have been submitted for final moderation. They can access the Markbook using their own Portal account and select a sample of learners to moderate on their pathway visits. Information on Pathway Moderation can be found on the Access to HE Quality section of the website.

13.6 Extensions, Aegrotat Awards and Posthumous Awards

If you have any learners for whom you would like to recommend for Extensions or Aegrotat awards you must complete the relevant form from those listed below and submit to quality@openawards.org.uk **no later than the day before the final pathway moderation meeting**. These documents can be found on the Access to HE Quality section of the Open Awards website (http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-quality-documents/) Depending on your circumstance, please use either:

- Request for an Aegrotat of an Access to HE Diploma
- Request for a Learner Extension

You should make sure that a copy of the request form and the confirmation of approval letter (if approved) is made available to the Pathway Moderator at their visit. All credits achieved by the learner should be moderated as usual.

Please note that no certificates will be issued for extended learners until their final awards have been recommended and verified. You must ensure that you submit the final results for these learners following the deadline confirmed by Open Awards and in readiness for final moderation.

Learners issued with an Aegrotat award will receive the Diploma certificate which contains the words 'Aegrotat Award'. Please ensure that learners are clear on the meaning of this type of award.

More information on Extensions and Aegrotats can be found on in section 6 and 11

13.7 Submitting Your Markbook

Once the final pathway moderation meeting has taken place and any required changes to the Markbook have been made, you should immediately submit the results in readiness for the Final Awards Board (FAB).

If you discover errors to the submitted results, you should contact the Open Awards Access to HE team immediately. You must also make the pathway moderator aware of the error. See the Secure Portal Guide http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-portal-guidance for information on submitting results.

The submitted Markbook will be approved by the Lead Moderator at, or immediately, after the

Final Awards Board has taken place.

More information on the Final Awards Board can be found on in section 11.

13.8 Processing of Results by Open Awards

Your results will be processed and certificates despatched within 10 working days of the Final Awards Board. To ensure this service standard can be met, results must have been submitted before the Final Awards Board and minutes must be received within 5 working days.

Please ensure that there is someone available to deal with results queries from us during this time as you may be asked to resubmit results. Please ensure that an approved portal user is also available.

13.9 Certification

Learners who have achieved the full Diploma will receive a Diploma qualification certificate and the unit transcript which may cover 2 pages. Learners who have not achieved the Diploma but have been awarded units will receive a unit transcript.

Certificates will be sent by recorded delivery to the designated Access to HE Administrator unless we have been notified of alternative arrangements. They should be checked immediately and distributed to learners as soon as possible to avoid any issues with their university application.

It is important that you notify us of receipt of the certificates via the secure portal within 5 working days using the guidance provided in the letter accompanying the certificates.

13.9.1 HEI Certificate Queries

You may be contacted by universities who need copies of learner certificates. They should be given certificates by the learners but you can refer them to the Open Awards Access to HE team or ahed@openawards.org.uk for direct access to learner results via the secure portal.

13.9.2 Learner Queries, Complaints and Feedback

We receive a range of queries from learners who would like information about their Access to HE course. In most cases we will refer them to providers as you are best placed to support their needs but we do deal with some learner queries.

13.9.3 Certificate Reissues

Learners can request a copy of their certificate directly through Open Awards or via their place of study. There is a certificate reissue charge of £25 or they can pay £15 for a statement of results. Universities and overseas validation agencies usually request an original certificate.

13.9.4 Learner Course Complaints

Learners sometimes feel the need to talk to us about their concerns regarding their course. We ask them to liaise with their place of study in the first instance and escalate their issues through the centre's complaints and appeals procedure. If they feel that the matter has not been resolved then we will investigate their issue. You can read more about the Open Awards Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy on our website (http://openawards.org.uk/centres/policies-and-procedures/)

13.9.5 Learner Registration and Achievement Data Reporting

SFA and QAA work with Open Awards and other Access Validating Agencies to review registration and achievement data each year so we are required to undertake extensive data analysis. We may contact you from time to time to request information or updates. We also provide annual reports on your own centre's achievement data.

Please ensure that learner data is accurate and complete and that we have the correct contact details for the colleague at your centre that we should liaise with

14. Access to HE Training

Open Awards provide annual training on Access administration, standardisation and assignment writing and quality assurance. Please ensure that the appropriate members of staff at your centre attend these sessions.

We can also provide bespoke training at your centre if required. Please note that this will incur a cost. Information regarding pricing can be found at :
http://openawards.org.uk/training-and- events/.

15. The Keith Fletcher Memorial Prize

As we have done for many years, this year Open Awards will supporting the Keith Fletcher Access to HE Memorial Prizes for students on courses during last academic year.

Keith Fletcher worked for many years in the South West of England within its successive Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) and was a great supporter of Access to HE. In memory of Keith's commitment to Access, a number of AVAs agreed to award prizes for Access students drawn from across the regions for 2010-11 and after a successful presentation event in London; it was decided to develop this as an annual presentation. The prize is now supported by all 13 AVAs across England and Wales.

As a participating AVA, Open Awards is invited to nominate one Access student on Access to HE Diploma courses in during last academic year for each of two prize categories: Outstanding Academic Achievement and Outstanding Commitment to Study.

We encourage nominations for the prize from all our Access to HE providers. This is a great opportunity for you to get the work of your exceptional students recognised on a national platform. All nominations should be sent to ahed@openawards.org.uk by late October. For more details go to www.openawards.org.uk

16. Feedback to Open Awards

At Open Awards we are committed to providing a service which is prompt, courteous, clear and responsive to customer and learner needs. We are keen to hear any feedback from all of our stakeholders which will help towards the constant review of our services and products.

If you would like to register a compliment, comment or complaint you may do so in accordance with our Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy which is available here: http://openawards.org.uk/about-us/compliment-comments-and-complaints/

17. Glossary, FAQs and Useful Links

FAQs can be found on our website http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/faqs/

QAA	Quality Assurance Agency: This is the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standard and quality in UK Higher Education.
HEI	Higher Education Institution – such as a University
ROC	Record of Achievement
AVA	Access Validation Agency – such as Open Awards
IV	Internal Verification
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
LRF	Learner Registration Form – administration for detailing information about each learner
SFA	Skills Funding Agency

Useful Links

The Open Awards Website has a dedicated Access to HE section where you will find all of the information you need, including FAQs: www.openawards.org.ukThe Access to HE Administration page includes all of the documents outlined in this handbook for you to readily download. http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he- administration/
All information regarding the use of the Open Awards Access to HE portal Guidance can be found in one place too http://openawards.org.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-portal-guidance/
For all other information, please go to the QAA Access to HE Official website.
http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx
If you would like to speak to our team, please feel free to call 0151 494 2072 or
email ahed@openawards.org.uk

Open Awards Training and Standardisation

2017-2018

For further information please see Pricing Information leaflet on the Open Awards Website

Training	Mode of Delivery	Time / Duration	Description	Dates	Charge
Introduction to Access for Providers	Live	1 hour	A session for all colleagues new to Access to HE delivery to help you get a taster for what's involved in the course cycle.	Available upon request	Free
	Online	1 hour	A short video introducing all colleagues new to Access to HE delivery to help you get a taster for what's involved in the course cycle.	On demand	Free
Administration Training	Live	2 hours	An annual update on the administration of Access to HE Diplomas. This session covers registration and awards processes and training on developments and policy changes where applicable.	Monday 11th September 2017 Tuesday 12th September 2017 Wednesday 13th September 2017 Thursday 14th September 2017 Friday 15th September 2017	Free
	Remote	2 hours			
Portal Training	Remote	30 mins	Short individual sessions delivered via remote online software and via short training videos. The training will focus on: • Registering learners • Recording and Submitting Results • Destination data	Available upon request	Free
	Online	30 mins		On demand	
Assignment Writing Training	Live	09.30 – 12.30	A familiarisation session for new colleagues in assignment writing. Also suitable as refresher training.	Thursday 25th January 2018 Tuesday 17th April 2018	£80
Introduction to Grading and Numerical Marking in Access to HE	Live	09.30 – 12.30	A familiarisation session for new colleagues in the use of grading and numerical marking on the Access to HE Diploma. Also used as refresher training when updates are introduced. Scheduled twice a year.	Wednesday 18th October 2017 Wednesday 2nd May 2018	£80
Introduction to Quality Assurance – Access to HE	Live	13.30 – 16.30	A familiarisation session for new colleagues in quality assurance of the Access to HE Diploma. Also used as refresher training when updates are introduced (2 hours).	Thursday 11th December 2017 Friday 15th June 2018	2 FREE places with Gold Recognition 3 FREE places with Platinum recognition [then £80 per delegate in-house and remote]
Introduction to Delivery and Assessment – Access to HE	Live	09.30 – 12.30	A familiarisation session for new colleagues in the delivery and assessment of the Access to HE Diploma. Also used as refresher training when updates are introduced. Scheduled twice a year (2 hours).	Thursday 11th December 2017 Friday 15th June 2018	

Malpractice, Maladministration and Plagiarism	Live	09.30 – 12.30	A valuable session for all colleagues in the delivery of the Access to HE Diploma (2 hours).	Thursday 7th December 2017 Monday 11th June 2018	£80
Regional Standardisation	Live	10.00 – 15.00	A session is held for each of the 7 pathways offered by Open Awards at which representatives from the relevant department at each college should attend. An opportunity to compare grading standards and assessment design across units and colleges. Lunch is provided.	Monday 12th March 2018 – Friday 23rd March 2018	Free
	Online	09.30 – 12.30	A session is held for each of the 7 pathways offered by Open Awards at which representatives from the relevant department at each college should attend. An opportunity to compare grading standards and assessment design across units and colleges.	Monday 12th March 2018 – Friday 23rd March 2018	
Access to HE Forum	Live	10.00 – 15.00	An opportunity to meet with colleagues and industry professionals, take part in discussions and receive updates from Open Awards on policy changes, industry updates and gain insight into the factors affecting Access to HE. Lunch is provided.	Monday 6th November 2017 Tuesday 6th February 2018 Thursday 24th May 2018 **Locations to be confirmed**	Free
Pre-FAB Support	Live	Half day	Bespoke sessions delivered on a 1-2-1 basis to offer individual support to providers to prepare for the Final Awards Board.	18th June 2018 – 13th July 2018	£250
	Remote				
Business Planning (including Marketing Support)	Remote	Half day or full day	Bespoke sessions delivered on a 1-2-1 basis to offer individual support to providers to help with business planning and course marketing. (no fixed time)	18th June 2018 – 13th July 2018	£250 for half a day/£500 for full day [plus expenses]
	Live	Half day or full day		Available upon request	
1-2-1 Support sessions (Via Phone)	Remote	1 hour	Support and advice sessions offered as and when required on any aspect of Access to HE delivery.	Available upon request	Free
Access to HE Surgery	Remote	Bookable in 30 minute sessions slots from 13.00 – 16.00	Offered monthly and time slots pre-booked for colleagues who wish to schedule in time with a member of the Open Awards Access to HE team.	27th September 2017 25th October 2017 29th November 2017 31st January 2018 28th February 2018 25th April 2018 23rd May 2018	Free

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